Life

We Asked Experts For 6 Very Good Reasons Not To Shower Every Day

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by **Teresa Newsome** and **Kaitlyn Wylde**
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For some, a shower in the morning provides stimulation to wake up and start the day, while a shower at night serves as a crucial rinse and relaxation tool. According to YouGov, an international research data and analytics group, most of us (66% of adults in the U.S.) find a reason to shower daily. But if you are scheduling a daily shower (or two) because you think you're *supposed* to, you might be relieved to learn that showering every day might not be that good for you.

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"There's no one-size-fits-all answer when it comes to personal hygiene," says Dr. Niket Sonpal MD, a New York-based internist and professor at Touro College. "Some skin can thrive on one shower a day, and other skin can dry out really easily. Two showers a day may be necessary for healthcare workers, construction workers, or people who work out later in the day." But showering too often when you don't have that personal, essential need, like getting dust and grime or germs cleared off, "can actually be detrimental to your skin," he adds.

When you shower too much, you dry out your skin, especially if you are scrubbing with an abrasive material or soap. "You can deplete the essential oils, lipids, and bacteria that help your skin fight off inflammation, maintain a smooth look and reinforce its protective barrier," Dr. Sonpal says. Worse, people with conditions like psoriasis or eczema could end up exacerbating their condition by showering too much. Though it's not visible, our bodies have built-in sanitation systems that help keep us clean, even when we're not scrubbing in warm water daily, Dr. Sonpal explains.

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Societal pressures might lead us to believe we are dirtier than we are, but these reasons not to shower every day can help you figure out what your best shower rhythm is.

1. You're Not Even Dirty

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"If you go to the gym everyday, or work in a chemical factory or medical facility, you can shower every day," Dr. Sonpal tells Bustle. Otherwise, you're probably not that dirty. According to Dr. David Lortscher, a board-certified dermatologist and CEO/founder of Curology, "showering a few times per week is enough for most people." Though we might associate oily skin with dirty skin, the reality is that "healthy skin retains a layer of oil," so it's best not to wash it away more than necessary — it's good oil!

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2. You Need That Bacteria

There is a delicate balance of microorganisms on the skin, and if it's disrupted with a harsh soap, the skin is left vulnerable to the emergence of more problematic organisms. Dr. Robert H. Shmerling, MD, reported in the Harvard Health Publishing Blog that "Our immune systems need a certain amount of stimulation by normal microorganisms, dirt, and other environmental exposures in order to create protective antibodies and immune memory." This is one reason why bathing daily can be considered harmful, as over time, Dr. Shmerling explained, the showers might reduce the ability of the immune system to do its job.

3. You're Drying Out Your Hair

Washing your hair each day can strip it of natural oils, which can make your hair dull, dry, or frizzy. According to Andrea L. Hayden, director of the International Association of Trichologists, you should only be washing your hair two times per week, especially if you have fine, weak, or damaged hair. On the days when you don't wash, you can still condition to help rebuild moisture, according to Hayden. If you're taking a shower because your hair appears greasy or flat, you can mist it with some dry shampoo or oil-absorbing powder instead.

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4. You're Drying Out Your Skin

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You might like a long, hot shower, but your skin doesn't. The hot water pulls the natural oils from your skin, which protect it and keep it hydrated and healthy. Dry, cracked skin can allow bacteria and allergens to breach the barrier healthy skin should provide, leading to skin infections, acne, or allergic reactions. If you already have eczema, a hot shower will exacerbate it, leaving you with inflamed, itchy skin. In general, Dr. Lortscher does not suggest hot showers at all to people who suffer from skin inflammation issues — instead, he suggests cool or warm showers to keep the skin calm.

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5. You're Messing With Your Scalp Health

hair once or twice a day, you can develop dermatitis, (both seborrheic and contact dermatitis) and fungal issues in the scalp," Dr. Sonpal says, who believes that typically every other day, or less, is ideal for shampooing. These conditions occur with too much washing because the oils are striped from the scalp, causing the skin to dry out and flake — hello, dandruff. "If you then pick at those flakes or scrape at them, you can even end up damaging your hair follicles, which could lead to hair loss," Dr. Sonpal explains. So, if you are struggling to pinpoint the right showering schedule for yourself, especially if you notice "heavy flake shedding, and yellowish or even pink scabs or building up," it's time talk your general practitioner or dermatologist about a treatment or shower plan that's right for you.

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6. You're Wasting Water

About 20% of the water lost in each shower goes unused, *The Washington Post* reported [illegible]. This is due to behavioral waste, aka when we're just idling under the water, waiting for it to get hot enough, relaxing, or taking our time in between products. According to Evolve, a entrepreneurial research company, behavioral waste can range from 1.7 to 3.4 gallons to as much as 2.5 to 4.9 gallons per shower. Back in 2015, California imposed a mandatory 25% water restriction for residents to help mitigate the drought. To avoid possible fines, Californians considered showering less to conserve water.

You now have experts' permission to stagger your shower routine, so take a break from scrubbing when you can. You're not as dirty as you think.

Experts:

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Dr. Niket Sonpal, New York-based Internist and Gastroenterologist and Adjunct Professor at Touro College

Dr. David Lortscher, Board-Certified Dermatologist and CEO/Founder of Curology

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Travel

How To Spend 3 Days In Masai Mara, The Safari Park From *The Lion King*

This Kenyan national park is one of the best places in the world to see lions, leopards, and cheetahs in the wild.

by **Lara Walsh**
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Bustle

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When it comes to planning an African safari, TikTok can agree on one thing: Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya needs to be on your itinerary.

"The Land of the Big Cats" has a reputation as one of the best places on the continent to see lions, leopards, and cheetahs in the wild; it was one of the main filming locations of the live-action *Lion King* movie.

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Masai Mara's location in the Great Rift Valley gives it a leg up on wildlife diversity compared to other reserves. Its 580 miles of lush savannah is home to almost 90 different mammal species, and safari-goers have a good chance of spotting all of the African "Big Five" — lions, leopards, elephants, African buffalo, and the elusive black rhinos — as well as members of the slightly lesser-known (but equally 'Gram-worthy) so-called "Ugly Five," hyenas and warthogs included. If you visit in late summer, you might even see the Great Migration of over 2 million wildebeests, zebras, and other herbivores crossing the Mara River from the neighboring Serengeti Desert.

This February, I spent 10 days visiting Kenya's national parks and game reserves on an itinerary curated by EF Ultimate Trip, a Gen Z and millennial tour company. After a week of bush glamping in sparsely vegetated and dusty parks throughout Kenya, Masai

The way comparatively lush, and my safari Jeep was constantly stumbling upon families of elephants, giraffes, and lions.

Lara Walsh

If you're heading to Kenya on safari soon or scrolling TikTok for future inspiration, here's what's worth doing at Masai Mara and how to spend three days at the reserve.

What To Do At Masai Mara

Day 1: Hang Out With Baby Elephants & Meet The Maasai Tribe

After a 20-plus-hour journey from Chicago, I stretched my legs at one of Nairobi's most popular attractions. The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's Orphans Project houses baby elephants and rhinos who are currently unable to survive in the wild for whatever reason, and it's just as cute as you'd expect. There was a collective "aw" as the tiniest baby black rhino stumbled out to meet the crowd, and we got introduced to all the baby elephants as they clumsily ran to the keepers for their bottles of milk.

The experience was more crowded and touristy than I expected, but I enjoyed learning the story behind each baby animal, seeing their personalities, and petting them. You're also able to sponsor one of the baby elephants or rhinos until they're ready to go back into the wild.

Lara Walsh

After hanging out with the animals, get into your safari Jeep to drive the five hours to Masai Mara. I stayed at PrideInn Mara Camp, which had glamping tents and cottages just steps from the park and Lake Talek, but there are plenty of accommodations around Masai Mara's perimeter (including regular hotels like a JW Marriott Masai Mara if sleeping in a tent without air conditioning isn't your vibe).

The best part of the PrideInn Mara Camp (and others in the area) is the presence of the Maasai tribe, which welcomed us with a traditional song and dance. There were also a

number of warriors who worked in the hotel and who would walk us to and from our rooms if it was late at night.

Day 2: Take A Hot Air Balloon & A Drive

The park is huge, so soaring over the savannah to see the landscape and animals from above is an efficient and bucket list-worthy way to start off your safari experience.

Lara Walsh

We had to wake up at 4 a.m. to head over to the hot air balloon launch site, but I quickly stopped complaining about the early call time when we were in the balloon and the sun was rising over Masai Mara.

We got to take in bird's eye views of the Mara River (including a rare sighting of an adorable baby hippo that was splashing through it), check out a family of grazing giraffes from above, and get eye-level with the vultures in the trees. Afterward, we enjoyed an English-style brunch with unlimited mimosas in the middle of the bush, then headed back to the camp to nap it all off.

Lara Walsh

In the early afternoon, we headed on our second safari and stayed until twilight. After spending almost two weeks in Kenya, I realized it's 100% worth doing two safari drives a day — one in the morning as the sun rises and one at dusk right before the predators are about to start hunting — to get the fullest picture of how the animals act in their natural habitat.

Depending on the time of day, you'll also see different personalities from the lions. When I went in the morning, the lions weren't the apex predators I'd anticipated. Instead, the pride was almost playful, with a young male lion with a dandelion mane nuzzling his father and the female lions, and cuddling with them in the sun. The only hint of their agility and quick reflexes were shown in how they quickly flipped from side to side and how alert they seemed at all times, with their heads suddenly popping above the grass when they'd been lazily napping in the sun just moments earlier.

Lara Walsh

Another day, as the sun went down, I saw a group of lionesses who'd been napping and were barely camouflaged in the long grass start to oh-so-casually make their move. They inched toward a grazing herd of wildebeests, their eyes locked on their next meal. I wouldn't have experienced these different personalities if I hadn't seen both in action.

Day 3: Go On A Morning Game Drive & Visit The Maasai Tribe

After going on a sunrise game drive, take an afternoon tour of the Maasai tribe's village. Dressed in signature bright red robes, the warriors greeted us at the entrance of their village. They taught us some of their chants and performed a 10-minute celebratory song and dance that we were encouraged to take part in, which included

Then, they sectioned us off into groups to tour the family huts and learn about their pastoral lifestyle. Many of the Maasai people have gone into tourism and are employed by hotels and other hospitality businesses in the area, but they're one of the few tribes where many members still practice their traditional way of life.

Lara Walsh

After the tour, we got to shop the tribe's gorgeous beadwork, carved wooden products, and other souvenirs. I picked up a blue bracelet, a beaded choker, and some wooden coasters painted with safari animals to bring back home with me.

Ultimately, I came back to Chicago feeling relaxed, inspired, and fully ready to take

and lizards in my tent).

Going on safari was life-changing for so many reasons. I was awestruck by seeing a 3-day-old hippo hanging out with his mom, and a pack of elephants racing across the savannah. I was surprised that the lions and giraffes seemed to barely take notice of our Jeep.

Lara Walsh

The safari also taught me a lesson in patience. Unlike in a zoo, you're not able to control when or where you'll see cheetahs, hippos, or prides of lions — which ends up making it so much more fulfilling when you do.

It's not a question of if, but when, I'll go back to Masai Mara on safari. And who knows — maybe this time I'll spend more than a few days exploring Kenya's most famous game reserve.

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